

Tax center files Wolf Pack's taxes

By Capt. Chris Karns
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Wolf Pack members who need help preparing their 2000 tax returns can visit the Kunsan Tax Assistance Center to have their federal taxes e-filed and state taxes prepared free until April 16. This year, the Internal Revenue Service deadline is April 16 since April 15 falls on a Sunday.

The tax center affords military members the option to file federal tax returns electronically and to receive a direct deposit refund in weeks, said Staff Sgt. Charles Von Nordheim, 8th Fighter Wing legal office tax assistance center NCO in charge. "We also prepare state returns. We don't transmit them here but we do prepare the returns for people to mail."

Thus far, the center's unit tax advisors have assisted more than 600 Wolf Pack members with filing returns, which saved each member about \$56 in preparation fees, or \$33,000 basewide, said Capt. Kelli Donley, 8th Fighter Wing legal office tax officer. Furthermore, Wolf Pack members have earned about \$546,000 in federal tax returns, which equates to roughly \$929 per person.

"There are top-notch NCOs running the tax center," Donley said. "There are also 20 dedicated unit tax advisors working at least four hours a week to help Wolf Pack members file their returns. We've got a very experienced staff who are able to handle even some of the more complicated tax returns, such as the sale of a home, stocks and rental properties. There is also a tax attorney on staff to assist with the unusual or (extremely) difficult returns."

According to tax center officials, to have federal and state returns prepared properly, military members must bring the following items:

- * W-2 forms for 2000. Married people should also bring their spouse's W-2 form.

- * 1099s or bank statements showing the amount of interest accrued on bank accounts during 2000.

- * Last year's tax return if you filed a 1040 (not a 1040EZ).

- * All documents for the following items: Social Security income, alimony payments, mortgage payments, dividends, interest earned, and capital gains and losses from the sale of stocks, bonds or property. Essentially, bring all tax documents you have received in the mail, including mutual fund statements, statements of mortgage interest paid or student loan interest paid, and, for those who were part-time college students in 2000, statements of how much you spent on tuition, fees and books.

- * If you are married and request to file a joint return, a power of attorney or IRS Form 2848 is required. The power of attorney requires a signature from your spouse and allows the servicemember to sign the electronic filing documents on behalf of the spouse.

Von Nordheim warns against people using the "Mom and Pop" method of filing taxes.

"A lot of airmen send their tax information home to their parents because that's how they've always done it in the past," Von Nordheim said. "While 'Mom and Dad' may be very good at (filing returns), and have filed them for 20 or 30 years in their home state, they may not know about the special clauses and exclusions available to military members. When we prepare (the tax returns), there is often a dramatic difference in the amount of refund we are able to obtain because we're knowledgeable about military exclusions."

For those nervous about volunteers filing the taxes, unit tax advisors have received training, and the legal office staff of experienced attorneys and tax center veterans is ready to help.

"With the amount of experience we have on staff, we're able to handle situations that might baffle others," said Von Nordheim. "We've had several customers start up real estate rentals for the first time, and we're able to prepare their returns. We're also able to do all the foreign income exclusions."

"If it is a simple return, we can usually accomplish the return in 20 minutes. A more complicated return that involves stock sales, real estate or some other specialized matter may take about 40 minutes."

The instruction unit tax advisors receive is IRS-mandated training.

"The unit tax advisors receive three days of intensive training," Donley said, pointing to a phone-book sized training manual. "All voluntary income tax assistance representatives nationwide receive this same IRS training."

For those who procrastinate, the IRS grants a two-month extension until June 15 for people serving overseas, Donley said. However, servicemembers who miss the April 16 deadline incur high interest penalties if they owe money.

"If people know they owe the IRS money, they should file an estimated tax return and pay the estimated tax by April 16 or they'll be required to pay interest of about 28 percent on taxes owed," Donley said. "If required, we can also assist with filing amendments to tax returns."

People can work through their own tax unit advisor, call the tax center or make a walk-in appointment, said Von Nordheim.

"Regardless of when people come in, we'll provide them with tax service," said Von Nordheim. "Every tax advisor works a full-shift. They're eager to help customers. We're considering extending the closure date of the tax center. Even if we close (April 16), we'll continue to help file tax returns during legal assistance hours."

Wolf's Bytes

Saturday marks the 70th anniversary of the 8th Operations Group. The 8th OG enjoys a rich and distinguished history and established its identity as one of the most lethal and celebrated units in the Air Force.

The 8th OG's sustained excellence continues today. It recently received an "Outstanding" sortie generation rating during the 2001 Pacific Air Forces Operational Readiness Inspection, proving the Wolf Pack's fangs remain as sharp and ready as ever.

Saturday's birthday bash will be awesome. It will allow us to reflect on and remember the sacrifices made by generations of warriors in true Wolf Pack style. It also allows us to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the region and to celebrate the wing and group's history of success. It's a proud heritage.

Today, the 8th FW and the 8th Operations Group, as the main tactical component of the wing, continue to contribute to the legendary Wolf Pack lore and remain ready to defend the base, accept follow-on forces and take the fight north.

The 70th Anniversary festivities kick off Saturday morning. The 8th OG hosts a golf tournament at the Westwinds Golf course. Current sign-in times are 6:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Players have been assigned sign-in times. The 70th Anniversary birthday bash social hour begins at 5:08 p.m. Both the officers' and enlisted lounges will be open for the social hour. Dinner starts at 6:08 p.m. The appropriate attire is BDUs or flight suits. Also, remember to wear your 70th Anniversary t-shirts. Each guest ticket to the birthday bash is the 70th anniversary coin.

The Loring Club will be open Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. to allow squadrons and units to decorate tables with unit specific items. Each group and squadron should also plan to bring their guidon.

Also joining us are some very special and distinguished guests. I'd like to extend a special Wolf Pack welcome to former 8th Fighter Wing commander and keynote speaker Maj. Gen. L.D. Johnston, Air Warfare Center commander. Also, welcome Brig. Gen. Gary North, 18th Wing commander, and Wolf 38, as well as Brig. Gen. David Clary, 51st Fighter Wing commander.

It's going to be a first-class celebration. Thank you Wolf Pack for all that you do.

Pride of the Pack



Job: 8th Fighter Wing Judge Advocate's NCO in-charge of Civil Law

Hometown: Palmdale, Calif.

Family: Wife and two sons reside in Belleville, Ill.

Hobbies: Bowling and play-writing

Words of wisdom: "Treat everyone equal, whether an airman or a general."

The Pride of the Pack is nominated by his or her commander, first sergeant or supervisor, or any Wolf Pack member, for outstanding value to their unit and dedication to the mission. To nominate a Wolf Pack member, send a nomination to the individual's group commander.



Staff Sgt. Charles Von Nordheim